



BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The Book Of **2 JOHN**

Modern Narrative Project

A Contemporary Rendering, Context,

Meaning & Commentary

Based on the King James Version

ROOT-TO-FRUIT

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BIBLE:ESSENCE

Bible Study Project

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This publication is intended for educational, devotional, and study purposes. Readers are encouraged to consult additional biblical translations and scholarly resources when conducting biblical research and study.

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DEDICATED TO GOD AND MY SON
... MY SON, MAY YOUR HEART FIND THE LORD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GEMMA, for opening the door so I could see.

PASTOR PHIL, for acknowledging and encouraging me to believe big and be fearless - giving clarity to the path I was seeing.

PREFACE

First, thanks for picking up this book. If there is anything good in these pages, give credit to God; anything weak or flawed, that’s on me. I wrote this out of gratitude—a small way to give back, hoping maybe it lights the path for someone else, just like Scripture has done for me:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

My journey to faith wasn’t in a moment of crisis, in despair, or some dramatic story. No lightning bolts, no instant conversion. Honestly, it was more like water slowly carving its path over time.

Back at University, nearly 40 years ago, my friends were genuinely fired up about their faith and invited me along. They, and their invitation for me to believe there is a God, are the reason I got baptised. It wasn’t about church pressure; I just knew I wanted what they had, even if I didn’t truly understand what it was. But one thing was becoming clear to me: I was experiencing something I came to understand as the work of the Holy Spirit.

After University, the real world arrived. For years, my faith stayed quiet and private. I said the Lord’s Prayer every day. I tried to live with an open hand and hoped God had a plan for me, especially when life made no sense. I tried never to judge others too quickly, because I could never know the whole story or what was in another person's heart. God alone sees all things and judges perfectly.

Still, I rarely set foot in church. My life was busy, and I worked most Sundays. I also hardly knew anyone who talked about their faith openly.

I tried reading the Bible, but wrestling with the King James Version just felt impossible. When I was baptised, there wasn’t the choice of Bibles we have today. Sure, I believed there was something bright and life-giving in its words. I wasn't rejecting the King James Bible. I simply couldn't understand much of its language.

Then, a couple of years ago, everything shifted.

I lost my job in a way that wasn’t fair. My father passed away—not long after celebrating sixty years with my mother. My son was also close to a breakdown—he had been working too hard. Soon after that, I moved into my mother’s home so that I could care for her.

I believe Scripture calls us to care for our own (1 Timothy 5:8), and there are times when that responsibility has to come before my ability to attend church. Leaving my mother to attend church is not always safe, and that has made regular attendance difficult.

This has never been a rejection of the Church or of Christian fellowship. Quite the opposite. My heart is entirely with God, and I genuinely believe that caring for my mother is where God wants me to be. She is slowly losing her hearing and vision, with Alzheimer’s taking away more of who she is each day.

It is a hard season, and it continues to be. But I don't resent where I am. With all my heart, I believe this is where I am meant to be, and where I want to be.

The quick succession, timing and intensity of these events in my life began to feel like part of God’s plan for me.

It was then that I found solace in the Bible, just as life felt cracked wide open. And yet, in that brokenness, I noticed what I’d missed before—God actually draws close to people whose hearts are shattered (Psalm 34:18). When I ran out of my own strength, I learned how much I could lean on His:

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The Bible became more than something I was trying to understand. It became something I needed, even a passion. I honestly cannot imagine where I would be now without it.

Caring for my mother meant I couldn’t run from thing to thing anymore, and I like to be busy. It also meant that I didn’t have as much time or access to friends, especially as I now lived in a new area. Life slowed down, and income dropped to just enough to cover bare necessities.

But in that quiet, a new door opened.

I started volunteering as a driver—just helping elderly and vulnerable people who simply needed a lift—and, in many cases, a lift in more ways than one. I also started sharing my faith. It’s a small thing, but it felt right—my passengers lifted me as much as I lifted them, and I felt comfortable sharing my faith.

James reminds us that caring for those in need is an important expression of faith (James 1:27).

That volunteering drew me back to church, and—probably for the first time ever—I found myself having real conversations with God. Not just polite, thank-you prayers that I had always done, but honest ones where I was asking for help. I no longer felt guilty about asking God for help, as though doing so somehow meant I didn't trust the path God had given me.

I was forming a relationship with God.

And something shifted. I started to realise that God doesn't just help; He guides us, and I was beginning to learn to listen (Proverbs 3:5–6). I also started seeing the Bible not simply as a set of instructions, but as a guide for how to live.

I also began to see something about Christian fellowship that I hadn't really considered before.

Human beings naturally form communities. We make friends, find people we are comfortable with, and over time those friendships become established. There is nothing wrong with that. But Scripture calls us to something beyond simply gathering with the people we already know.

My own circumstances have sometimes left me on the edge of those established friendships. Even when I am able to attend church or volunteer, I often have responsibilities waiting for me at home. Sometimes I have to leave as soon as I can. At other times, I stay longer than I should because there is work that needs doing before I can return home.

I don't want that to be mistaken for being unfriendly or uninterested. Quite the opposite. I want fellowship. I want friendship. I want to feel that I belong.

This experience has taught me to be cautious about judging what I see in another person. I may see someone who does not stay, does not talk much, or seems distant, but I cannot know the circumstances behind what I see. God sees the whole story; I see only a small part of it.

That does not mean we should never exercise discernment. There are times when we need to recognise what is right and wrong, protect ourselves or others, and act when something is clearly harmful. But I believe we should be very slow to turn an observation into an assumption, an assumption into a judgement, and a judgement into exclusion. This has become clearer, while studying the Bible.

There may be someone standing on the edge of a church who desperately wants to belong. There may be someone carrying a burden that nobody else knows about. There may be someone searching for God who is quietly watching how Christians treat one another.

And that matters.

There are already enough barriers between people and God without Christians unintentionally creating more.

Jesus gives us a powerful picture of this in the parable of the lost sheep. The shepherd has ninety-nine sheep, but when one goes astray, he goes looking for it. The ninety-nine are not unimportant. But neither is the one.

That image has stayed with me.

If someone is struggling to understand Scripture, perhaps we should not simply assume that they will eventually find their way. If someone is standing on the edge of a Christian community, perhaps we should not simply accept that they are outside it. If someone appears distant, perhaps we should remember that we do not know their whole story.

Sometimes all that is needed is for someone to notice them, make room for them, and make sure they are not quietly left on the outside.

I don't say any of this as a criticism of the Church, and I certainly don't claim to have all the answers. I say it because Scripture has made me increasingly aware that following Christ changes not only our relationship with God, but also the way we see and treat other people.

Perhaps that is one of the things God has been teaching me through this season:

I cannot know another person's whole story, but I can choose not to become another barrier in their way.

So, I decided to really read the Bible, cover to cover.

My memory has always been atrocious, so I started typing out every verse, hoping the hands-on effort would help me absorb the words more effectively. Next to each King James verse, I wrote out what I thought it meant in plain English and started researching to gain more clarity.

Partly, I did it because I'd missed years of church teaching, and because I had put down the Bible in the past because of the frustration of not understanding more clearly the words that I read. But mostly, I did it for my son—he's autistic, he's exhausted, and as his father, I wanted to understand Scripture well enough to explain it to him. So, I decided to tackle my frustration with the Bible head-on.

Breaking it down for him became my main reason for all this—a way to do what Deuteronomy 6:6–7 calls us to:

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...”

After I finished the first chunk, I showed it to my pastor because I wanted to be sure I hadn't missed the mark. He encouraged me greatly and told me to keep going.

So, I did.

Book by book, it grew, and I kept one thing front and centre:

“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” (Habakkuk 2:2).

“Let me be clear about what this is, and what it's not.”

This is not a rewrite of the Bible, or any sort of replacement for it. Scripture is the foundation:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

I haven't altered the Scripture itself. Every King James verse is there in full, so you can clearly see what is Scripture and what is my attempt to explain it. What I have written alongside it is simply plain-English meaning and explanation—for people who are new to the Bible, even the young, to help them move towards understanding what is being said.

“Call it a companion, not a substitute. I call it Bible:Essence Project as it is simply that, the essence of the Bible.”

That line matters to me. I’ve tried to make the language simpler, not shrink the meaning. Where a verse is difficult to put into plain English, or where faithful Christians have understood it in more than one way, I try to say so rather than pretend there is only one possible interpretation.

This isn’t a new idea. In Nehemiah 8:8, the Levites read God's law and then explained it so everyone could understand. When Philip came across the Ethiopian man in Acts 8, that man admitted he couldn't understand Scripture without help. And Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

“Unless you speak words that are easy to understand, how will anyone know what you’re saying?” (1 Corinthians 14:9).

Helping people understand Scripture has always been part of the life of God's people. I'm simply trying, in a very small way, to do the same.

There are many Bible studies and guides written by people who have a passion for God and a desire to share what they have learned. I make no claim to be different in that respect. I am simply another person who has found something in Scripture that I want others to have the opportunity to discover.

I didn’t write this as a scholar, and I don’t expect you to read it as though you’re taking a course. I’m simply an ordinary person whose faith deepened later in life, who still gets stuck on difficult passages, and who wanted to find a way into Scripture—for myself, for my son, and perhaps for you too.

Perhaps coming to a deeper understanding later in life has given me a perspective that can help someone else who is only just beginning that journey.

I’m not claiming to have all the answers, and I certainly don’t want you to take my explanations as a substitute for Scripture. Please check what I’ve written against the Scripture alongside it, and where something is difficult or open to more than one interpretation, I will try to say so.

My hope is not that you take my word for anything, but that my efforts might help you engage with God's Word for yourself.

If you already know the Bible well, I hope you'll forgive the simplicity of some of the explanations. They aren't written because I think Scripture is simple, but because I remember what it felt like when it wasn't.

And if you find that I've misunderstood something, I hope you'll test my words against Scripture, as I have tried to do myself.

I’m not looking for money or recognition. Most of these last few years, I’ve been caring for my mother and using whatever spare time I could find to chip away at this project. In a strange way, the two have gone hand in hand.

My prayer is that these efforts, offered to God, will do the quiet work in your heart that His Word began in mine.

I’m trusting, as Isaiah says, that God's word never returns empty—it always does what He intends (Isaiah 55:11).

Honestly, my hope is simple:

“That these pages help you move from feeling stuck with the text to beginning to understand it—and that, somewhere along that journey, you encounter God, as I did.

I hope you come to feel the love of the Bible as I do, and feel blessed by the wisdom of God’s Word as it shines through its pages.

I am continually in awe of the Bible. Although it was written more than 2,000 years ago, the wisdom it contains is just as relevant today as it has ever been—and, perhaps more than ever, that wisdom is needed now in our world.”

And if that happens for even one person, then all the time and effort that went into these pages will have been worth it.

Don’t worry if you struggle like me to remember Bible verses. Be assured that as you read, the verses will enter your heart, soul — and even your bones!

May God bless you, and may His Word do in your heart what it has done in mine. **Amen.**

Methodology Declaration:

The research for this Bible Study was conducted using a variety of sources, including Bible study plans available through YouVersion, other Bible study books, websites, and AI tools.

AI was used as a research and reference tool, rather than as a means of generating the Bible Study itself. Where AI was used, I used a platform that allowed me to submit the same prompts to multiple AI models and compare their responses. I then analysed and cross-referenced the information provided, with the aim of identifying inaccuracies, inconsistencies, or potential AI “hallucinations.”

The research from these various sources, including the AI-assisted research, helped me to develop my understanding of the subjects discussed and influenced some of my thinking. However, the content and wording presented in this Bible Study were written by me, based on my own understanding, analysis, and interpretation of the research.

If you’ve enjoyed what this Bible study has revealed to you, why not visit my website, where you’ll find many more resources that reveal the wonder and awe of the Bible? www.root-to-fruit.faith

Book Summary: 2 John

The book of 2 John is a concise letter from an anonymous "elder" to a "chosen lady" and her children, often interpreted as a local church and its members. It serves as a brief but urgent appeal for believers to continue living in truth and love, according to God's commandments. A primary concern of the letter is to warn against false teachers who deny the physical coming of Jesus Christ, instructing believers to reject these deceivers and not offer them any support, lest they become accomplices in their deceitful work. It emphasises the importance of discerning genuine doctrine and remaining faithful to the original teachings received from God.

CHAPTER 1

Chapter Summary: 2 John 1

Chapter 1, the entire book of 2 John, opens with a warm greeting from "the elder" (traditionally John) to "the elect lady and her children" - most likely a coded way of addressing a local church and its members - grounded in truth and love. He rejoices that some of her children are walking in truth, and reminds them of the foundational command to love one another, defining love as living according to God's commandments. The letter then sharply warns against deceivers who deny Jesus Christ came in the flesh, instructing readers not to receive such teachers into their homes or even greet them, since doing so would make them a partaker in their evil deeds. It closes warmly, with the elder preferring to say more face to face rather than in writing, and passing on greetings from a related community.

1:1 *(KJV)* The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;
(B:E Project) This letter is from someone known simply as 'the elder', writing to a woman he calls 'chosen' and to her children. He says he loves them 'in the truth' - and he's not the only one; everyone who has come to know the truth loves them too.

Context: This opens the letter. It is written by 'the elder' (traditionally understood as the apostle John, writing in old age) to 'the elect lady and her children' - most likely a warm, coded way of addressing a local church and its members, since the closing verse mentions 'her elect sister's children' in the same way.

Meaning: Right from the first line, love and truth are tied together - he doesn't just say he cares about them, he says his care is rooted 'in the truth'. That's the whole letter in miniature: real affection isn't separate from honesty, it's built on it. For a modern reader, it's a useful corrective to the idea that being loving means never being truthful, or that being truthful means you can't be warm.

Lesson: I want you to notice how the elder starts with love before he says one word of warning later on - that order matters. Lead with genuine affection for people, and let your honesty grow out of that care, not out of a need to be right.

See Also: 3 John 1:1 opens almost identically ('The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius'), showing these two short letters are companion pieces from the same hand. 1 John 3:18 also links love with truth: 'let us not love in word... but in deed and in truth.'

1:2 *(KJV)* For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.
(B:E Project) He explains why this love is so solid: it's because of the truth that lives in them, a truth that isn't temporary but will stay with them forever.

Context: This continues the opening sentence begun in verse 1, explaining the basis of the elder's love before he moves into his formal greeting in verse 3.

Meaning: The claim here is bold: truth isn't just information you learn and might forget, it's something that takes up residence in a person and stays for good. That's a striking idea for anyone used to thinking of 'truth' as just facts - here it's framed as something lived-in, permanent, load-bearing, the kind of foundation you can actually build a life on rather than a passing opinion.

Lesson: I want the truth I've shown you to feel less like a rule to memorise and more like a home you live inside - something steady that doesn't shift when circumstances do. Let that permanence be a source of calm, not pressure.

See Also: John 14:17 speaks of 'the Spirit of truth' who 'dwelleth with you, and shall be in you' - the same language of truth taking up residence. 1 John 2:24 similarly urges 'let that... abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning.'

1:3 *(KJV)* Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.
(B:E Project) He then gives a blessing: may grace, mercy and peace be with them, coming from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son, and may all of it be held together 'in truth and love'.

Context: This is the formal greeting that completes the letter's opening (verses 1-3), a standard feature of ancient letters but given real theological weight here by the closing phrase 'in truth and love'.

Meaning: Grace, mercy and peace are a trio worth sitting with: undeserved kindness, compassion when you've fallen short, and a settled wellbeing that isn't just the absence of conflict. What's distinctive is the closing tag - 'in truth and love' - which again refuses to let either stand alone. A peace built on comfortable lies isn't real peace, and a love that can't tell the truth isn't real love.

Lesson: I bless you with grace when you mess up, mercy when you're struggling, and peace even when things around you are unsettled - but I want you to receive all three honestly, not as a way of avoiding hard truths. Real peace can hold difficult conversations inside it.

See Also: 1 Timothy 1:2 and 2 Timothy 1:2 use the same three-part greeting 'grace, mercy, and peace'. John 1:17 notes that 'grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' - the same pairing found here.

1:4 *(KJV)* I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.
(B:E Project) He says he was overjoyed to discover that some of her children were living according to the truth, just as the Father had commanded.

Context: This begins the letter's main body, moving from greeting into personal warmth - the elder has apparently had contact with some members of this community and is delighted by what he's seen.

Meaning: Notice the word 'some' - not all, just some. That's honest, not sentimental; he's genuinely glad about what's going right without pretending everything is perfect (the warning later in the letter shows why). It's a healthy model: you can be truly happy about someone's progress without needing to claim total success, and 'walking in truth' here means truth showing up as a way of life, not just as a belief.

Lesson: I take real delight when I see even some of you living out what's true, not the whole crowd at once - progress in a few people is still cause for joy, not a reason to feel you've failed everyone else. Celebrate the good you see rather than fixating on what's still missing.

See Also: 3 John 1:4 says almost the same thing: 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.' 1 John 1:6-7 similarly frames the Christian life as 'walking' - a practical, ongoing way of living, not a one-off decision.

1:5 *(KJV)* And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.
(B:E Project) Now he makes a request - not a brand new rule, he says, but the one they've had since the very beginning: that they love one another.

Context: This is the pivot into the letter's central appeal, echoing the language of 1 John 2:7-8 almost exactly - the command to love isn't new, it's foundational.

Meaning: There's something reassuring about being told a demand isn't new - he's not adding pressure, he's reminding them of something already built into the foundation. Loving people well isn't a fresh burden to take on; it's the oldest, most basic instruction there is, which means it's meant to be achievable, not some advanced level you have to work up to.

Lesson: I'm not handing you a new hoop to jump through when I ask you to love one another - this has always been the point, since the very start. Treat it as your default setting to return to, not an extra task on top of everything else.

See Also: 1 John 2:7-8 uses nearly identical wording about an 'old commandment... which ye had from the beginning'. John 13:34 records Jesus himself giving this as 'a new commandment... that ye love one another'.

1:6 *(KJV)* And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.
(B:E Project) And here's what love actually is, he says: living according to God's commands. And this is the command - just as they heard from the start - that they should live it out.

Context: This verse defines the love just mentioned in verse 5, closing the loop before the letter turns to its warning in verse 7.

Meaning: This is a deliberately practical definition - love isn't defined here as a feeling but as a pattern of living, walking according to what's right. It guards against a soft,

sentimental idea of love that has no content; real love has shape and direction, it shows up in how you actually act toward people day to day, not just in warm intentions.

Lesson: Don't wait to feel loving before you act lovingly - I've always cared more about the walk than the words. Let the small, repeated choices of how you treat people be the real evidence of love, not just what you say you feel.

See Also: 1 John 5:3 states this almost identically: 'this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' John 14:15, Jesus's own words: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'

1:7 *(KJV) For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

(B:E Project) He warns that many deceivers have gone out into the world - people who won't acknowledge that Jesus Christ came in human flesh. Anyone like that, he says, is a deceiver and an 'antichrist'.

Context: The tone shifts sharply here from warm encouragement to firm warning, opening the letter's central concern (verses 7-11) about false teachers denying Jesus's genuine, physical humanity.

Meaning: This targets a specific early distortion: some teachers claimed Jesus only seemed human, or that the divine 'Christ' was separate from the man Jesus and left him before his death - denying he genuinely entered human experience in the flesh. Why did it matter so much? Because if Jesus wasn't truly human, then his life, suffering and example aren't really proof that a fully engaged, embodied life of love is possible for us - the whole point collapses into a nice idea rather than a lived reality.

Lesson: I really did come and live it - hunger, tiredness, grief, pressure, all of it - because a love and truth that never touches real, physical, difficult life isn't much use to you. Don't let anyone convince you that goodness is only theoretical; it has to be lived out in the actual conditions of a real life, like mine was.

See Also: 1 John 4:2-3 states this test almost word for word: 'every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist.' John 1:14, 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'

1:8 *(KJV) Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*

(B:E Project) He tells them to watch themselves carefully, so they don't lose what they've worked for, but instead receive a full reward.

Context: This is a direct application of the warning in verse 7 - given that deceivers are active, the community needs to guard what it has built.

Meaning: This isn't about earning worth through effort - it's about not letting hard-won growth quietly slip away through carelessness or by absorbing bad influence. Think of it like physical fitness or a skill you've built: it's genuinely possible to lose ground you've

gained if you stop paying attention to what's shaping you, so staying alert to influences is just realistic self-care, not paranoia.

Lesson: I don't want you to throw away the ground you've already gained - pay attention to what you're letting shape your thinking and your habits, because it's easier to protect progress than to rebuild it from scratch. This is watchfulness born of care for yourself, not fear.

See Also: 1 John 5:18 speaks of guarding oneself so 'that wicked one toucheth him not'. 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 uses similar language of work and reward being preserved or lost.

1:9 *(KJV) Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*

(B:E Project) Anyone who goes too far and doesn't stick to the teaching of Christ, he says, doesn't have God at all. But whoever stays rooted in that teaching has both the Father and the Son.

Context: This continues the warning against the deceivers of verse 7, drawing out the stakes of drifting from the core teaching about who Jesus is.

Meaning: The word 'transgresseth' here carries the sense of running ahead, overstepping into something new rather than staying grounded in what's already been given - a fitting description of teachers pushing novel ideas about Jesus. The point is that some claims aren't just alternative flavours of the same thing; getting the foundation wrong changes everything else that's built on it, which is why this isn't presented as a minor disagreement.

Lesson: I want you rooted, not constantly chasing the newest idea about who I am - staying grounded in what's actually true keeps you connected to something real, while drifting from it, however exciting it feels, leaves you holding nothing solid. Roots aren't restrictive; they're what let you stand.

See Also: 1 John 2:23 says the same thing plainly: 'Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.' 1 John 4:15, 'Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him.'

1:10 *(KJV) If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:*

(B:E Project) If someone comes to them without holding to this teaching, he instructs, don't take them into your home, and don't even greet them.

Context: This is the letter's most pointed practical instruction, applying the warning directly to how the community should treat travelling teachers who deny Jesus's true humanity.

Meaning: This makes far more sense once you know the culture behind it: travelling teachers relied entirely on being hosted by local believers, and hosting someone was effectively a public endorsement plus financial backing for their teaching tour. This verse

is not generic advice to shun anyone who disagrees with you - it's specific guidance about not lending your home, your name and your resources to someone actively working to dismantle the community's core truth. It's about not funding your own undermining, not about coldness to people in general.

Lesson: I'm not telling you to close your door on people who think differently, or who are struggling, or who disagree with you - I'm asking you to notice when your support is being used to actively spread harm to people you love. Discernment about where you lend your credibility is wisdom, not unkindness.

See Also: 1 John 4:1, 'try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world' - the same discernment being urged here. 3 John 1:9-10 shows the flip side, a leader (Diotrephes) wrongly refusing to welcome genuine, faithful travellers - a warning against taking this principle too far.

1:11 *(KJV) For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*

(B:E Project) Because, he explains, anyone who welcomes such a person becomes a partner in their harmful work.

Context: This gives the reasoning behind the instruction in verse 10 - closing out the warning section before the letter's warm final farewell.

Meaning: This is really a statement about how support and endorsement work: when you back someone publicly and materially, you become linked to what they do with that backing, whether you intended their harm or not. It's a principle that still applies well beyond this specific case - lending your platform, your resources or your name to someone isn't neutral, it's a form of participation in whatever they go on to do with it.

Lesson: Think about what you're lending your name and your support to - not out of suspicion of everyone, but because I want you to be honest about the fact that backing someone is never a neutral act. Choose where you invest your trust and resources with your eyes open.

See Also: 1 Timothy 5:22, 'neither be partaker of other men's sins' - the same concern about shared responsibility through association. Ephesians 5:11, 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.'

1:12 *(KJV) Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.*

(B:E Project) He says he has much more he could write, but he'd rather not put it all on paper - he hopes instead to come and see them in person, so that their shared joy can be complete.

Context: This begins the letter's warm closing (verses 12-13), pulling back from the firmness of the warning into personal affection and a longing for face-to-face connection.

Meaning: There's something very human and relatable here - the recognition that written words, however useful, are a poor substitute for actually being together. He'd rather save the fuller conversation for when he can see them, hear them, and share the moment directly. It's a reminder that even necessary written correction is not the same as relationship, and real joy is something shared in person, not just conveyed through a message.

Lesson: Letters and messages have their place, but I always valued being physically present with people over sending word from a distance - don't let digital connection fully replace showing up for the people you care about. Full joy tends to need presence, not just information.

See Also: 3 John 1:13-14 ends almost identically: 'I had many things to write, but I will not... I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face.' John 16:22, Jesus promising his disciples 'I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice... and your joy no man taketh from you.'

1:13 *(KJV) The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.*

(B:E Project) The letter closes: the children of your sister, who is also chosen, send their greetings to you.

Context: This is the final verse of the letter - a brief closing greeting from another related community ('thy elect sister'), mirroring the letter's opening address to 'the elect lady and her children'.

Meaning: This closing line is actually a clue to the whole letter's meaning: if 'the elect lady' is a way of referring to one church, then her 'elect sister' is naturally another church nearby, and their 'children' are its members - fitting neatly with how verse 1 addressed the reader. It's a small but telling detail, and it ends the letter exactly as it began: with a picture of connected communities bound together by shared truth and mutual love, sending warmth across the distance.

Lesson: Even at the very end, I want you to notice how connection reaches across communities, not just within your own close circle - other people who share this same truth and love are cheering you on too. You're never as isolated in this as you might feel; there's a wider family holding the same things dear.

See Also: 2 John 1:1 mirrors this closing greeting, forming bookends around the whole letter. 3 John 1:15 ends similarly with personal greetings passed on: 'Greet the friends by name.'

